

PART II --PLANNING PROCESS

BEAR RIVER DISTRICT PDM PLANNING PROCESS

This mitigation plan is the result of a comprehensive and coordinated planning process. Beyond involvement of the general public, a great deal of the effort focus was on coordinating and getting input from the thirty nine cities, towns and counties located in the Bear River District.

How the Plan was Produced

Professional planning staff at Bear River Association of Governments (BRAG) was responsible for coordinating the planning process and producing the document. The process was overseen and coordinated with BRAG's fifteen member governing board who served as the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee (see membership lists at the end of this section). In addition a Hazard Mitigation Technical Team was assembled to provide guidance, input and technical assistance to the planning process. This team was primarily comprised of emergency management coordinating staff as well as public works and planning staff representing interested entities in BRAG's three county region.

The first phase of the project was targeted to education outreach and input. BRAG's Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee was informed of the State of Utah's approach to meeting the



planning requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and endorsed the approach as well as providing suggestions on how the plan should be produced. See Appendix C for a full copy of the above article.

On September 12, 2002 the first meeting of BRAG's Hazard Mitigation Technical Team convened to introduce the requirements of the DMA2000, to discuss solutions and respond to any questions or concerns. At this meeting it was decided that the community officials representing the 39 different municipalities in the region should be informed early about the process and their responsibility and given a chance to provide input. It was decided that since most of the cities are represented by volunteer part-time elected officials any information would need to be concise, simple and targeted to be effective.

At this meeting it was decided that a one page "fact sheet" should be produced and disseminated to elected officials and other interested parties (See Appendix C). In addition it was suggested that a short survey form be produced and mailed along with the fact sheet and cover letter to the chief elected official of each jurisdiction (See Appendix A for the results). Agreement was reached that the survey instrument needed to be non-technical and be short enough to be

completed in a half hour or less. Given the time constraints for most of the volunteer elected officials, survey response rates will be reduced for lengthy technical surveys.

It was also decided rather than set ongoing meetings for the Hazard Mitigation Technical Team, we should communicate on an “as needed” basis and use phone, email and postal mail to keep connected. Arrangements were made to obtain all hazard mapping, ordinances, reports, plans and documents related to natural hazard identification, mitigation or response.

On October 12, 2002 BRAG staff met with the Cache County Mayor’s Association at one of their regular meetings. Elected officials from all of the incorporated municipalities in Cache County were present as well as county officials. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce them to the requirements of DMA2000 and describe the BRAG region’s approach and process. Elected officials in attendance were given a fact sheet and survey and encouraged to complete it soon. The need for local input was emphasized in terms of history of hazard events, identification of problems and development of mitigation strategies. In addition, the cities were informed of their role in adopting the plan when complete (See Appendix C).

Later in October 2002 BRAG staff met with the Box Elder Council of Governments. This meeting had a focus on homeland security and natural hazard mitigation planning. A good representation of the county’s elected officials were in attendance as well as emergency management personnel. Topics of discussion were similar to the Cache County meeting (See Appendix C).

All but two of the chief elected officials for Rich County, sit on the Natural Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee. Coordination with the others was achieved on an individual basis.

Next, a great deal of time was spent collecting information related to natural hazards from local jurisdictions and other sources. This effort was guided by the surveys completed by most of the jurisdictions. Many hours were spent in the special collections section of Utah State University’s library collecting local reports, studies, thesis and dissertations related to natural hazards in the tri-county area. A rather exhaustive inventory of papers and reports documenting past natural hazard problems or events was compiled.

At the same time a natural hazard GIS database was being developed. Local sources of data were investigated and many GIS data layers were collected (almost 4 gigabytes). Most of this data already existed and was clipped and incorporated into the database. Some data was not in digital form and was deemed so essential to the quality of the planning effort that BRAG digitized the data to use in the GIS. For example, the FEMA flood plain maps were not in GIS digital format. Flooding threat is such a significant issue in terms of ongoing, predictable risk it was decided to “heads up” digitize these maps by “rubber sheeting” scanned copies. This effort took a considerable amount of time, but in our view was necessary to a quality, complete analysis of hazards.

The next phase of the process was to analyze the data to identify hazard conflicts as it relates to developed areas and to complete the risk assessment part of the plan. Meeting the FEMA requirements in this regard proved challenging with the data we had available. In terms of a GIS

parcel level data source with property values included, the database is incomplete for the three county areas. We had to develop our own approach given the data we had available. We spent a great deal of time developing, testing and refining an approach that produced the output we required, given the information available (See discussion on “Hazard Analysis Process in Part IV).

All along in this process various local elected officials, city personnel and emergency management officials were kept in touch with in terms of process updates, requests for verification of analysis results and confirmation of data accuracy and relevancy that may be from a statewide source in their local areas. Also as clarification on the Hazard Mitigation Planning Process came from FEMA in the form of a series of “How-to Guides” became available. These documents were ordered and disseminated to emergency management contacts so we all had a common understanding of the process and goals.

In September 2003, Logan City and Brigham City Emergency Managers received a small grant to refine their hazard mitigation goals and objectives and develop a comprehensive hazard mitigation project list or “workbook”. Emergency managers in each of the two cities coordinated the collection, evaluation and prioritization of the mitigation strategies and projects. Various stakeholders, city departments and elected officials participated in this process. This work was done in concert with BRAG’s PDM effort for this plan. Logan City and Brigham City had the draft PDM plan to provide a basis to complete their community workbooks. The projects and strategies that resulted from this localized effort are incorporated into this document.

At a November 8th 2003 “Citizen Planner” training workshop attended by over **forty local Planning Commissioners and other elected and appointed community officials**, a presentation was made on hazard mitigation planning and the draft plan material was made available to attendees for review and comment. Attendees were also directed to the plan’s Internet web site for the full content of the plan (<http://www.brag.dst.ut.us/develop-hazard%20mit.htm>).

In November 2003 the final draft version of the plan was promulgated for review and comment. Again, elected officials were asked to help identify and describe any potential hazard mitigation projects they would like to see included in the plan. To assist the local officials develop their mitigation strategies and projects, a six page list of potential mitigation projects categorized by hazard and type (public awareness, property protection, prevention, structural projects, natural resources protection, and emergency services projects).

The planning process, general regional data, risk assessment sections along with their jurisdiction’s county annex was mailed in hardcopy form to each mayor and county commissioner in the three county region. Again, elected officials were directed to the BRAG website if they wished to see the full version of the plan.

In December 2003, Legal Public Notices were published in all papers with general circulation in the three county region. The notices made the public aware of the draft plan and opportunities to review and comment on the plan. Readers were encouraged to view the plan on the project website (See Appendix C).

In addition, individual meetings were held with most of the emergency managers in the region to discuss the draft plan and gain comments and input. Besides the emergency managers, a draft version was mailed to the Cache Countywide Planning Office, Cache Metropolitan Transportation Organization, Bear River Health Department, Cache County Chapter of the American Red Cross, Bear Lake Regional Commission and the Utah Association of Conservation Districts for comment.

All incorporated counties, cities and towns within the three county region participated in the preparation of the plan. However, the level of involvement each jurisdiction had in the process varied. All jurisdictions were sent the community survey (see Appendix A). Those that did not return the survey were contacted by phone to follow up. Also, through out the process, all jurisdictions were sent draft material and were encouraged to provide comments or input at various phases. All were sent the FEMA “How-to Guide” on State and Local Mitigation Planning in order to build a common understanding of the process.

Most jurisdictions participated in the meetings and workshops and most provided written input, however some did not. This should not be misconstrued as non-participation. Early in the planning process some jurisdictions simply did not feel they had any hazard problems of significant magnitude to motivate direct participation. Often with education on the issues these people were brought to the table. In addition, when contacted by phone and asked for comments to the plan, some officials simply indicated they were happy with the content of the plan as it related to their jurisdiction and did not feel the need to comment.

Regional Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee

Commissioner Clark Davis
Box Elder County

Mayor Lou Ann Christensen
Brigham City

Commissioner Suzanne R. Rees
Box Elder County

Commissioner Scott Hansen
Box Elder County
Mayor H. Paul Orme
Honeyville City

County Executive M. Lynn Lemon
Cache County

Councilmember Darrel L. Gibbons
Cache County

Mayor Alma Leonhardt
Providence City

Mayor Doug Thompson
Logan City

Councilmember Cory Yeates
Cache County

Commissioner Norman Weston
Rich County

Commissioner Bill Cox
Rich County
Mayor McKay Willis
Laketown

Mayor Craig Showalter
Woodruff Town

Commissioner Thomas J. Weston
Rich County

Regional Hazard Mitigation Technical Team

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Logan City Corp. (Cache County)

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Logan City Corp. (Cache County)

Thad Erickson
Water Advisory Board
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Denton Beecher
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